

REMARKS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the examiner has allowed claims 1-11, 30 and 31, in the form existing after filing of the reply to the Office Action mailed March 12, 2002, and has withdrawn the previous restriction requirement.

Claims 12, 14 and 16 have been objected to as being informal. Claims 12, 14 and 16 have been amended and it is believed that these claims are no longer open to objection as being informal.

The independent claims 12 and 20 have been rejected on the ground of anticipation by Rämö et al and CA 1 171 680.

The declaration of Reijo Kalevi Hakkarainen is submitted herewith in support of the position that claims 12 and 20 are patentable. This declaration shows that Mr. Hakkarainen is an expert on the subject of his declaration and accordingly his opinion on this subject should be given weight.

Claim 12 is directed to a key blank of a key for operating a disc cylinder lock of a specific structure. Claim 20 is directed to a key for operating a disc cylinder lock of a specific structure. Applicant acknowledges that the structure of the lock itself cannot be relied upon to distinguish the claims to the key blank and the key from the prior art. Nevertheless, the structure of the lock, as defined in claims 12 and 20, is helpful in defining the structure of the key blank and the key respectively because the key must have a structure such that it is suitable for operating the lock and the key blank must have a structure such that it is suitable for making a key that can operate the lock.

As noted above, claim 12 is directed to a key blank. Claim 12 specifies that the basic form of the shank of the key blank is substantially symmetrical with respect to a plane containing the longitudinal axis of the shank and is substantially rectangular except for beveled surfaces that are inclined to the plane of symmetry of the shank and include a first bevel surface for providing combination surfaces for engaging the locking discs for turning the locking discs in a first turning direction and a second bevel surface for providing combination surfaces for engaging counter surfaces of the locking disc for turning the locking disc in a second turning direction. Rämö et al does not show a key blank that meets the limitations of claim 12. The examiner has referred to FIG. 5 of Rämö et al, but FIG. 5 does not

disclose a key blank that meets the limitations of claim 12. Claim 12 requires that the shank be substantially symmetrical with respect to a plane containing the longitudinal axis of the shank, but it is clear that the shank of the key blank shown by Rämö et al is not substantially symmetrical about a plane containing the longitudinal axis of the shank. Further, the key blank shown in FIG. 5 of Rämö et al does not have first and second bevel surfaces that meet the requirements of claim 12. If, for example, we consider the surface 33, which can be cut to provide combination surfaces for turning the locking discs in the clockwise direction, to be an apt counterpart of the first bevel surface, the surface 33 does not meet the requirement that it should be inclined to a plane of symmetry of the shank. In addition, if the surface 33 is considered to be an apt counterpart of the first bevel surface, the only possible counterpart for the second bevel surface is the surface that extends from the channel 25 to the edge 28. This surface also is not inclined to a plane of symmetry of the shank and there is no disclosure in Rämö et al that this surface should provide combination surfaces for turning the locking discs in the counterclockwise direction.

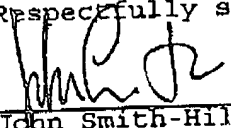
The examiner refers to FIGS. 12 and 13 of CA 1 171 680. FIGS. 12 and 13 show the cross-sectional configuration at the locations B and A respectively of the key shown in FIGS. 9 and 10. See page 14 of CA 1 171 680. It is evident from FIGS. 9 and 10 of the Canadian reference that neither FIG. 12 nor FIG. 13 illustrates the configuration of the shank of a key blank. It might be possible to draw inferences regarding the cross-sectional form of the shank of the key blank from FIGS. 9-14, but applicant submits that it is clear that the blank would not meet the limitations of claim 12. Specifically, the key blank does not have rotational symmetry of order 2, which allows the shank to be inserted in a lock in two different angular orientations.

Claim 20 is directed to a key for operating a disc cylinder lock. Claim 20 distinguishes over Rämö et al by reciting that the bevel surface is inclined at an acute angle to a plane containing the longitudinal axis of the key shank and a central axis of the rectangular cross-sectional form of the key shank. Claim 20 distinguishes over CA 1 171 680 because the key shown in FIGS. 9-14 is not suitable for use in a disc cylinder lock, as shown by paragraph 8 of Mr. Hakkarainen's declaration.

Since claims 1-11, 30 and 31 have been allowed, applicant believes that it is not necessary to point out the patentable novelty of these claims. Applicant has, however, pointed out the patentable novelty of the other independent claims.

It is believed that all issues raised in the communication mailed October 29 have been addressed and that this application is in condition for further examination.

Respectfully submitted,

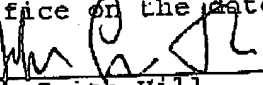
  
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